

It is several months worth of car payments. It is real money to real people, and it is just wrong that under our Tax Code married working couples pay more just because they are married.

Let me give an example here of a south suburban couple on the south suburbs of Chicago. We have a machinist, who of course works at the Joliet Caterpillar Plant making that big equipment. He makes \$30,500 a year.

Under our current Tax Code, if he is single and files as a single taxpayer, after we subtract the standard deduction and exemption, if he makes \$30,500, he is in the 15 percent tax bracket. But if he meets and decides that he wants to get married to a schoolteacher with an identical income, and her income is \$30,500, of course, she is in the 15 percent tax bracket if she is single and stays single, but if she decides to marry this machinist their combined income is \$61,000 because they file jointly, which pushes them into the 28 percent tax bracket.

With the marriage tax penalty, they pay on average the almost \$1,400 in marriage tax penalty if they choose to get married. If they choose not to, they do not pay that marriage tax penalty.

Madam Speaker, the Marriage Tax Elimination Act has 230 cosponsors, a majority of this House. Let us make elimination of the marriage tax penalty our number one priority as we work to lower taxes for American families. Let us simplify to make the Tax Code fair to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 33 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PEASE) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Steven L. Wolverton, Lee Street Memorial Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland, offered the following prayer:

Our most gracious Father in heaven, we humbly acknowledge Your majesty and Your Lordship over everything. Father, I pray that with all Your glory, Your power, Your mercy, and Your grace, that You would make yourself known here, and that Your presence, and Your truth might be breath-takingly crystal clear to all.

Father, I pray that You would deliver us from vain hypocrisy and impress

upon us as a Nation, as individuals, and as leaders, the values of character, honesty, and integrity.

Father, humble us and direct our attention towards You for true wisdom and discernment. Father, I pray that each Member of this Congress might be absolutely mindful of Your existence, Your presence, Your deity, and Your will as they conduct the business You have entrusted them on behalf of Your people. Lord, help us love one another.

In the name of my Lord and my Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. LANTOS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR H.R. 1802, FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE ACT OF 1999

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules is expected to meet later this week to grant a rule which may restrict amendments for consideration of H.R. 1802, the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999.

Any Member contemplating an amendment to H.R. 1802 should submit 55 copies of the amendment and a brief explanation of the amendment to the Committee on Rules no later than noon on Thursday, June 24. The Committee on Rules office is in H-312 of the Capitol.

Amendments should be drafted to the text of the bill as reported by the Committee on Ways and Means on June 14.

Members should use the Office of Legislative Counsel to ensure that their amendments are properly drafted and should check with the Office of the Parliamentarian to be certain their amendments comply with the rules of the House. All of this with reference to the H.R. 1802, the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, Members are so notified.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1658, CIVIL ASSET FORFEITURE REFORM ACT

Mr. GOSS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report

(Rept. No. 106-193) on the resolution (H. Res. 216) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1658) to provide a more just and uniform procedure or Federal civil forfeitures, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 33, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT AUTHORIZING CONGRESS TO PROHIBIT PHYSICAL DESECRATION OF THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. GOSS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106-194) on the resolution (H. Res. 217) providing for the consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 33) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizing the Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

COST OF GOVERNMENT DAY

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, today is Cost of Government Day, and as George Bernard Shaw once said, "A government which robs from Peter to pay Paul can always depend upon the support of Paul."

Well, the tax paying Americans have been robbed because during the first 173 days of the year, every penny earned by the hard-working men and women of this Nation has been used to pay for government bureaucracy and the added cost of government regulations.

It did not go to pay for their kids' education. It did not go to pay for medical costs or expenses. It did not go to pay for the home mortgage. It all went to pay for government bureaucracy and regulatory agencies.

Almost one-half of the year's effort of these hard-working Americans was spent just to pick up the tab for government bloated bureaucracy. Decades, decades of unchecked growth and deficit spending by the tax and spenders have left the hard-working men and women of this country with this crushing tax burden.

The vast majority of Americans do not object to paying their fair share of taxes, but they do object to the suffocating level of taxation that exists today.

Mr. Speaker, for our children's sake, let us allow hard-working families to keep more of their money, not less. Let us stop robbing Peter to pay Paul.

I urge my colleagues to support meaningful tax reform this year.